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Zen and Zarathustra

Self-Overcoming without a Self

André van der Braak

Abstract: A confrontation with the Zen Buddhist tradition can help to open up new perspectives on Nietzsche's thought that take us beyond the "familiar" Nietzsche. There are some gaps in most Nietzsche interpretations that could be fruitfully addressed by means of a comparison with East Asian thought. This article argues that Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen philosophy can both be considered philosophies of self-overcoming in four different respects: theoretical, performative, self-referential, and expressive. In a theoretical sense, both stress the importance of self-overcoming. In a performative sense, both aim at self-overcoming in the reader. In a self-referential sense, they continually overcome themselves as philosophy. In a self-expressive sense, both can be viewed as a celebration and expression of self-overcoming; they are philosophies of laughter and play. In reading Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, these four aspects meet each other.

Keywords: Zen, self-overcoming, enlightenment, transformations of the spirit, Zarathustra

Introduction to Nietzsche and East Asian Thought

East Asian philosophical traditions can be seen as "emerging traditions" that call for an engagement with Western philosophical thinkers. Nietzsche is a prime candidate for such an engagement. He can be considered a transcultural thinker who aimed to revitalize Western culture by using his self-proclaimed "trans-European eye" (*KGW* III.5, p. 221). Nietzsche was one of the few Western philosophers with an interest in non-Western philosophies, especially Buddhism, even if his familiarity with Buddhism was limited to early Buddhism,[1] and his understanding of Buddhism was marred by nineteenth-century preconceptions of Buddhism as a "cult of nothingness," as Roger-Pol Droit has called it.[2] In line with these preconceptions, Nietzsche rejected the early Buddhism that he knew as a life-denying nihilism.

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Nietzsche's thought has been extensively received and commented on by Japanese philosophers such as Nishitani. But although the comparison between Nietzsche and East Asian thought has had a long history in Japan, it is fairly recent in the West. Only since the 1980s have some affinities between Nietzsche and East Asian thought been pointed out in comparative studies, for example in Graham Parkes's landmark collection *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*.[3] As Parkes has observed, "[N]ow that Nietzsche is finally coming into his own is the time for a more philosophical engagement with thinkers of those Asian traditions, in which dialogue based on correspondences between both sides aims at precise elucidation of the divergences. Time, finally, for more of us to cast a trans-European eye over Nietzsche's legacy."[4]

A confrontation with East Asian thought can help to open up perspectives on Nietzsche's thought, because it takes us beyond the "familiar" Nietzsche. There are some gaps in most Nietzsche interpretations that could be fruitfully addressed by means of a comparison with East Asian thought. As Roger Ames has observed, since Nietzsche is part of our own Western philosophical tradition, we all too easily expect him to share with us some unannounced assumptions. The seeming exotic nature of East Asian thought can help us to get behind what we initially take to be familiar in Nietzsche, only to discover that he too is very exotic indeed.[5] For example, Nietzsche's famous declaration of the death of God has often been misunderstood as a radicalization of the Western Enlightenment. But Nietzsche's "philosophizing with the hammer" served for him as a preparation for a revaluation of all values, a return to a life-affirming mode of existence, and even a new way of speaking about the divine—as can especially be found in his work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Nietzsche was a transcultural thinker who used comparisons with non-European philosophical traditions in order to question what we call our "own." He not only used non-Western philosophy to criticize his own Western tradition, but also attempted to go beyond it to a more global "world philosophy." (It is therefore fitting that he has been read widely in non-Western cultures, especially Japan and China.) A comparative study with a non-Western philosophical tradition does justice to Nietzsche's own aspirations to go beyond Western philosophy. Nietzsche can be considered a transcultural thinker with a self-described trans-European and even trans-Asiatic eye. Therefore, to read Nietzsche himself with a trans-European eye (an East Asian eye, even further removed from Europe than the Near Asian and Indian eye that Nietzsche had in mind) can further elucidate Nietzsche's work. It must be pointed out, however, that there are also substantial limitations inherent in comparing a single (and quite iconoclastic) thinker such as Nietzsche with a general category such as "Buddhist thought," or even "East Asian Buddhist thought," or even "Zen." What is known in the West as the single entity of "Zen" in reality comprises a varied and heterogeneous collection of Buddhist traditions in China, Japan, Korea, and other East Asian countries, that span about fifteen hundred years.

An Overview of the East Asian Engagement with Nietzsche

The East Asian engagement with Nietzsche has so far taken place in China and Japan. Hans-Georg Moeller has pointed out an interesting dichotomy between Chinese and Western types of "Sino-Nietzscheanism." Chinese interpreters of Nietzsche tend to read him as an "individualist," in line with earlier Western existentialist and humanist Nietzsche interpretations (e.g., Walter Kaufmann's influential interpretation): "The 'individualist' Nietzsche was quite compatible with the search for an 'icon' of modern individualism that might provide some orientation within the quest of modernizing and strengthening the Chinese nation and culture."[6]

Western interpreters, however, no longer read Nietzsche primarily as an existentialist, but more as a predecessor of postmodern thought—a "pre-postmodernist." Western Sino-Nietzscheans, such as Parkes and Wohlfart, are particularly interested in how both Nietzsche and early Daoism overcome subjectivism, individualism, anthropocentrism, and humanism.

Nietzsche's thought has been extensively studied and interpreted in Japan. In the departments of philosophy and religion at the State University of Kyoto, a group of Japanese philosophers tried to express Zen Buddhist thought in Western philosophical concepts. The initial inspiration of this new movement, which came to be known as the Kyoto school, was Kitarō Nishida, widely acknowledged as the foremost modern philosopher of Japan, who took his inspiration from phenomenology and William James. Nishida's student Keiji Nishitani was very well read in Nietzsche. Other Japanese philosophers who have published on Nietzsche are Abe, Arifuku, and Ōkōchi.[7] Bret Davis has followed on from Nishitani in his article "Zen after Zarathustra."[8]

Nishitani engaged with Nietzsche's project of overcoming decadence and nihilism. Throughout his work, Nishitani sought a resolution to the problem of self-overcoming. The Western formulation of the problem was flawed, he argued, because the search for self-overcoming remained strictly within the realm of the cognitive, the logocentric, and the rational. Zen could enrich the search because the breakthrough sought through Zen meditation was one that involved the total person and yielded truths about the nature of the self that went beyond the cognitive to produce a total experiential realization of the self.[9]

Nietzsche, Zen, and the West

In an interesting twist of fate (or karma), Nietzsche and Zen have suffered similar misrepresentations in their reception throughout the twentieth century.

1. Initially, both were misrepresented as an antiphilosophical mysticism and a panacea for an ailing Western culture. Steven Aschheim has documented the many Nietzsche cults throughout Europe that claimed Nietzsche's thought for

their own brand of spirituality.[10] Zen was presented to the West as a universal mysticism that contained the core of all religions without cultural baggage, especially through the writings of D. T. Suzuki (or through the way that they were misunderstood by a popular audience) and writings such as Nazi philosopher Eugen Herrigel's bestseller *Zen in the Art of Archery*.[11]

2. Just as Nietzsche's thought was misused by the Nazis, Zen thought was misused by the Japanese government in an effort to justify their war efforts. Both were seen as philosophies "beyond good and evil" that justified violence. Western Zen priest Brian Victoria published *Zen at War* (1997), documenting nationalism and war crimes by Japanese Zen masters.[12] A 1995 publication, *Rude Awakenings*, stressed the need for a critical self-examination within the Zen tradition itself.[13]
3. Both Nietzsche and Zen made a comeback in the fifties and sixties and were popular among philosophers, theologians, psychologists, and spiritual seekers. In the fifties, Zen was embraced by artists and intellectuals such as Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and Alan Watts, who formed the Beat Zen Generation. They embraced a kind of "Nietzschean Zen" beyond good and evil, a radical iconoclasm that went beyond all conventions. In the sixties, Western counterculture claimed both Nietzsche and Zen in their protest against rationalistic Western culture. Nietzsche's "God is dead" was echoed by the Zen dictum "if you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him." Zen was one of the non-Western philosophies that was invoked as a way of criticizing Western culture.

In a related development, Japanese Zen masters (roshis) came to teach in the West (Yasutani, Maezumi, Shunryu Suzuki, Sasaki), and their Western students became roshis as well (Richard Baker, Robert Aitken, Philip Kapleau, Dennis Merzel, Bernie Glassman, Daido Loori). They emphasized not so much Zen philosophy, like the Beat Zen generation, but Zen as a religion, which included traditionally and culturally mediated meditation practices such as the sitting practice of zazen and koan practice, and all kinds of ritual.

Nietzsche and Zen were strange bedfellows throughout the twentieth century. Perhaps in the twenty-first century, a dialogue between them can open up new and liberating insights into aspects of their thought that have been undervalued and underemphasized.

Nietzsche and Zen as Philosophies of Self-overcoming

Nietzsche and Zen can both be considered philosophies of self-overcoming in at least four different respects: theoretical, performative, self-referential, and expressive.

NIETZSCHE'S WAY TO WISDOM AND THE ZEN WAY TO ENLIGHTENMENT

The Zen tradition, like Buddhism in general, stresses the importance of self-overcoming, in order to reach awakening or enlightenment. But also for Nietzsche, self-overcoming is one of the most important notions in his philosophy.

Among Nietzsche's notebook fragments of 1884, we find a brief outline for a book with the title *The Way to Wisdom—Hints for an Overcoming of Morality*. In this fragment, Nietzsche distinguishes three stages as part of the process of overcoming morality: "*The first stage*. To honor (and obey and *learn*) better than anyone. [. . .] *The second stage*. To break the adoring heart (when one is *captivated most*). The free spirit. [. . .] *The third stage*. Great decision, whether one is capable of a positive attitude, of affirmation" (*KSA* 11:26[47]).[14]

These three stages can be seen as three perspectives or modes of experiencing that can be distinguished in Nietzsche's work. In the first stage, one obeys respected authorities and learns from educators, teachers, and examples. One's perspective is heteronomous or other-oriented. The free spirit of the second stage has gained independence from others by liberating itself from his adoration of authorities and examples. This perspective can be called autonomous or self-oriented. The third stage of unconditional affirmation goes beyond such a self-oriented perspective to a cosmic or world-oriented perspective.

The transformations between these perspectives are expressed famously as the three transformations of the spirit in the first speech of part I of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, delivered while in the town of the Motley Cow, where the Buddha used to deliver his sermons, as Nietzsche was probably aware of.[15] On its way to wisdom, the spirit first transforms into a camel, a strong, weight-bearing spirit, in which reverence dwells. The camel seeks out challenges; it kneels down to be weighed down with the heaviest burden. In the desert, the camel transforms into a lion, who is able to defeat the dragon of the "thou shalt" by saying "I will" (*Z* I: "On the Three Metamorphoses"). The spirit, that as a camel loved and revered everything that it held sacred, now must, as a lion, find delusion and caprice even in the most sacred. It discovers that the will to truth, that drove the camel, is actually an illusion.

But even the lion is not capable of creating new values, because it is too identified with its newfound autonomy of "I will." It must realize that both "I" and "will" are illusory notions. The autonomous self with a sovereign free will is a fiction. Therefore the lion voluntarily lets go of its newfound autonomy, and, as Nietzsche puts it, "goes under." It literally overcomes itself and is transformed into a child: "innocence is the child and forgetting, a beginning anew, a play, a self-propelling wheel, a first movement, a sacred Yea-saying" (*Z* I: "On the Three Metamorphoses").

Also in the Zen tradition several hermeneutical schemas have been used in order to describe the way to enlightenment. A famous one is the three-stage schema of mountains and rivers, as expressed for example by Zen master Qingyuan (ca. 660–740): "Thirty years ago, before I practiced Zen, I saw that mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers. However, after having achieved intimate knowledge and having gotten a way in, I saw that mountains are not mountains and rivers are not rivers. But now that I have found rest, as before I see mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers."[16]

The insight that mountains are not mountains can be interpreted as the realization of emptiness (*śūnyatā*):[17] there is no essence to be found anywhere; things are not what they seem to be; all "truths" are exposed as merely conventional designations. All searching for truth needs to be left behind; there is no truth. The insight that mountains are really mountains refers to the emptiness of emptiness, the end of any attachment to the liberating insight of emptiness. This results in a restoration of innocence, and an affirmation of the world as it is. The result of the first self-overcoming, the negation of truth, needs to be overcome as well, in a second negation.

These two conceptualizations of the way to wisdom in Nietzsche and Zen have a common structure. Both start with an other-directed perspective: Nietzsche's camel and the seeker after enlightenment initially pursue a way to wisdom by following the teachings and instructions from their respective traditions. For the camel, this is the "thou shalt" that its culture imposes on it. For the Buddhist seeker, it is the Buddhist path toward enlightenment (practicing meditation, studying texts). Both need to emancipate themselves from such an other-oriented perspective. Nietzsche's camel needs to transform into a lion in order to emancipate itself from the dragon of the "thou shalt," the Buddhist practitioner needs to realize the emptiness of all Buddhist conceptions, and let go of enlightenment as a goal that can be realized by seeking anything outside himself.

However, for both Nietzsche and Zen this first crisis is followed by a second one: the newfound autonomy of the self-oriented perspective eventually needs to be left behind as well, in order to realize a world-oriented perspective. Zarathustra declares that the lion needs to "go under" in order to transform into a child. The lion's emancipation from the camel's heteronomy needs to be followed by an "emancipation from the emancipation," as Nietzsche put it in a letter to Lou Salome (*KSB* 6:247–48). Similarly, the Zen practitioner needs to let go of his hard-won realization of emptiness, and awaken to the emptiness of emptiness. A second conceptualization of the Zen path, the ten ox-herding pictures, make this even more clear. After searching for the ox, capturing it, taming it, and riding it home (a metaphor for realizing enlightenment), the ox disappears. And finally, in the tenth picture, the path culminates in returning to the marketplace and effortlessly and unselfconsciously manifesting enlightened activity.

The notion of a culmination of the path in some final state of enlightenment sounds teleological, but several Zen thinkers go to great lengths to stress that the language of goals and the "in order to reach" have deep limitations. Mahayana Buddhism emphasizes that "we are already awoken (original enlightenment)." Japanese Zen master Dōgen (1200–1253) coins the antiteleological notion of *shusho itto* (the oneness of practice and realization). He refuses the common medieval Japanese Buddhist notion of *mappo* (the current age is a time of degeneration in which the dharma cannot be transmitted anymore) on the grounds that the dharma is always already present, and Buddha nature is not something that,

presently lacking, will one day come about. Even the most delusional state is, from the perspective of Zen mind, utterly full and complete.

From such a third-world-oriented perspective, any preoccupation with one's own condition of enlightenment has evaporated. Any signs of enlightenment, of being anything special, have gone. One is simply available, ready to respond as needed to the vicissitudes of life, and be of service to life itself.[18]

In a Performative Sense

Nietzsche's philosophy is not merely abstract or theoretical but rather aims at such a self-overcoming in the reader. As Nietzsche remarks, "We have to *learn to think differently*—in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more: *to feel differently*" (*D* 103). The transformation from one perspective to another might be interpreted as learning to think differently, as a relative transformation, an emancipation and liberation within the same field of reference. However, these transformations involve not only a change in cognitive outlook—seeing the world differently—but also a process of letting these different ways of thinking sink in and allowing them to change us at the very core of our being—experiencing the world differently. They involve learning to both think and feel differently. This is what Nietzsche's intention was in writing *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. As Nietzsche admits in *Ecco Homo*, his writings after *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* are intended as fishhooks, in order to transform his readers so they will be capable of assimilating *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Also, Zen philosophy is not merely theoretical; the aim of any Zen text is always to stimulate self-overcoming in the student. Zen criticizes other Buddhist schools for being too theoretical and metaphysical. Buddhism has consistently declared itself to be, above all else, a soteriology rather than a creed. It judges its own doctrines primarily for their transformative power: the truth of a proposition consists in its practical utility rather than its descriptive power.

Throughout the Buddhist tradition, the Buddha is referred to as a physician or a therapist rather than a philosopher or a theorist. Also Nietzsche refers to himself as a physician, whose task it is to lead himself and those rare others who are capable of it to "the great health" (or at least prepare the way for the philosophers of the future who will be capable of it). Nietzsche refers to the Buddha as "that profound physiologist" (*EH* "Wise" 6). Although Nietzsche thinks that he himself would be the opposite of the Indian Buddha, his therapy in fact comes close to Zen therapy.

In a Self-Referential Sense

For Nietzsche, life, conceived as will to power, is that which continually overcomes itself. Also as an individual, it is in one's very nature as a creature of will to power that one must continually overcome oneself. Self-overcoming refers to not only a process of individual self-enhancement but also self-*Aufhebung* in a dialectical sense. Therefore, any philosophy of self-overcoming must also continually

overcome itself. And Nietzsche's philosophy practices what it preaches: it continually overcomes itself. His experimental philosophy continually contradicts and leaves behind earlier positions and perspectives, and goes to great lengths to avoid being frozen into a system. Also his views on self-overcoming are continually overcome. For Nietzsche all perspectives are equally expressions of will to power, necessary preconditions for life. Interpretation, for Nietzsche, is the continual mutual confrontation of perspectives, an agonal activity not aimed at agreement, but at a continual self-overcoming. Perspectives are continually superseded by new ones.

In Zen, not only Buddhism but also Zen itself is continually overcome. Even the Buddha himself needs to be left behind. As the popular Zen saying goes, "if you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him." Zen engages in guerrilla warfare against any reification of concepts, especially Buddhist ones. Zen stresses that enlightenment is nonteleological; it vehemently criticizes early Buddhist conceptions of enlightenment as a goal to be reached.

Any comparison between Nietzsche and Zen that would merely point out some structural similarities in their conceptions of self-overcoming would be problematic and misleading. Both in Nietzsche's work and in the Zen tradition, there is a tension between such systematic and linear descriptions of a way to wisdom, and an ongoing deconstruction and overcoming of such systems. Nietzsche writes in a late notebook fragment, "I distrust all systems and systematizers and avoid them: perhaps someone will discover behind this book the system that I have *avoided* . . ." (*KSA* 12:9[188]).

Also the Zen masters continually frustrate any attempts to fix the Zen teachings into a coherent system, as is clear from the koan collections that contain interactions between Zen masters and their disciples. In a sense, just like Nietzsche's attempts to undermine the Western philosophical tradition with his aphoristic style, the Zen tradition rejects the sutra canon of the established Buddhist traditions, and replaces it with several aphoristic koan collections.

IN A SELF-EXPRESSIVE SENSE

Nietzsche's affirmative, Dionysian philosophy can be viewed as a celebration and expression of self-overcoming. It is a philosophy of laughter and play, what Roberts calls "ecstatic philosophy."[19] Also Zen is a philosophy of laughter and play that considers the embodiment of self-overcoming as a way toward openness and making room for otherness. Solving a Zen koan means *expressing* the answer to that koan, not coming up with a discursive insight into it.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra

Reading *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is where these four aspects meet each other. It is possible to discover a "theory of redemption" in *Zarathustra*. However, such a theoretical reading is too limited by itself. Therefore, it may be more productive

to read *Zarathustra* also as a performative writing, aiming at teaching the reader to think and feel differently. Third, any systematic "redemptive" reading of *Zarathustra* proves highly problematic, and reveals many inherent contradictions in the notion of redemption itself. Didn't Nietzsche himself offer as a prayer, "redeem us from redemption and all redeemers"? Therefore, *Zarathustra* is as much about the overcoming of redemption as it is about redemption. As a writing, *Zarathustra* continually overcomes itself, perhaps even including the fourth part, which overcomes the first three parts. And finally, a fourth way to read *Zarathustra* is to view it as an *expression* of Nietzsche's Dionysian philosophy. Remember that Nietzsche himself called *Zarathustra*, no doubt ironically, his "fifth gospel."

Many of these questions about Nietzsche and Asian thought, and about Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, deserve further exploration, perhaps on all four levels mentioned in this article. Such a further exploration needs to be not only on a theoretical level (discovering new and enriching perspectives). It also should result in both thinking and feeling differently. On a self-referential level, perhaps any new conclusion or position one might reach on Nietzsche and Zen might immediately undermine itself. And as for the ecstatic fourth Dionysian expressive level, it is an open question whether this can be accommodated by academic philosophy.[20]

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Notes

1. See Thomas H. Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Reading about Eastern Philosophy," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 28 (2004): 3–27.

2. Roger-Pol Droit, *The Cult of Nothingness: The Philosophers and the Buddha* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

3. Graham Parkes, ed., *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Other publications of interest include Freny Mistry, *Nietzsche and Buddhism: Prolegomenon to a Comparative Study* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1981) and Robert G. Morrison, *Nietzsche and Buddhism: A Study in Nihilism and Ironic Affinities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). Morrison claims that, ironically enough, Nietzsche's thought can be interpreted as akin to the early Buddhism that he was familiar with and rejected as a form of passive nihilism. He therefore calls his comparative study "A Study in Ironic Affinities." Another collection of essays on Nietzsche and African American thought (Jacqueline Scott and A. Todd Franklin, eds., *Critical Affinities: Nietzsche and African American Thought* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006]) bears the title *Critical Affinities*.

4. Graham Parkes, "Nietzsche and East Asian Thought: Influences, Impacts, and Resonances," in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. Bernd Magnus and Kathleen M. Higgins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 377.

5. Roger T. Ames, "Nietzsche's 'Will to Power' and Chinese 'Virtuality' (*De*): A Comparative Study," in Parkes, *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*, 132.

6. Hans-Georg Moeller, "The 'Exotic' Nietzsche—East and West," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 28 (2004): 57–69, citation on 61–62.

7. Ryogi Ōkōchi, "Nietzsches *amor fati* im Lichte von Karma des Buddhismus," *Nietzsche-Studien* 1 (1972): 36–94; Ryogi Ōkōchi, *Wie man wird, was man ist. Gedanken zu Nietzsche aus östlicher Sicht* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985); Masao Abe, *Zen and Western Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985).

8. Bret W. Davis, "Zen after Zarathustra: The Problem of the Will in the Confrontation between Nietzsche and Buddhism," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 28 (2004): 89–138.

9. As Bret Davis notes, even though Nishitani described his own work as coming from "the standpoint of Zen," he can be considered a Zen Buddhist thinker only in the sense of having critically and creatively developed the Zen tradition in philosophical dialogue with Western thought. Bret W. Davis, "The Kyoto School," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2010 Edition)*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/kyoto-school.

10. Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany: 1890–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

11. Eugen Herrigel, *Zen in the Art of Archery* (London: Routledge, 1953). For a critical discussion of this work, see Shōji Yamada, "The Myth of Zen in the Art of Archery," *Journal of Japanese Religious Studies* 28.1–2 (2001): 1–30 and Shōji Yamada, *Shots in the Dark: Japan, Zen, and the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

12. Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War* (New York: Weatherhill, 1997).

13. Jim Heisig and John Maraldo, eds., *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, & the Question of Nationalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995).

14. See also *KSA* 11:25[490].

15. The Motley Cow (*die Bunte Kuh*) is a translation of a name of a town, Kalmasadalmya, which the Buddha visited on his wanderings. See Mistry, *Nietzsche and Buddhism*, 17.

16. This aphorism occurs in many variants in the Zen literature, but was first attributed to Master Qingyuan in the *Compendium of the Five Lamps* (Wudeng Huiyuan), quotation from Zokuzoukyou 138: 335a, lines 9ff. See also Jay L. Garfield and Graham Priest, "Mountains Are Just Mountains," in *Pointing at the Moon. Buddhism, Logic, Analytic Philosophy*, ed. Mario d'Amato, Jay L. Garfield, and Tom J. F. Tillemans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 71–82.

17. Although *śūnyatā* is mostly translated as "emptiness," another possible translation may be "openness."

18. Garfield and Priest, "Mountains Are Just Mountains," 74.

19. Tyler Roberts, *Contesting Spirit: Nietzsche, Affirmation, Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

20. This article is based on a keynote paper delivered at the Friedrich Nietzsche Society conference on Zarathustra in Cork (September 21, 2013). It is an edited digest of materials that were published earlier in my book *Nietzsche and Zen: Self-Overcoming without a Self* (Lanham, MD: Lexington 2011), especially in the introduction and chapters 1, 2, and 3.